



*Libby* (11)

RAMSEY  
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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# Annual Report

OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER  
OF HEALTH

UPON THE

**Sanitary Conditions of the District  
during the year 1956.**



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# TO THE RAMSEY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Council.

I beg to submit the Annual Report on the sanitary conditions of the district for the year ending 31st December, 1956.

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## **Members of General Purposes Committee**

Chairman : F. G. Cooke,

Mrs. M. Darby

R. Bedford, A. E. Papworth,

F. T. Allen, J. R. Bridgestock,

C. W. Green, L. M. Slote, E. H. C. Jones.

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## **STAFF :**

**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

**F. D. F. STEEDE, M.B., B.Ch., D.P.H.**

**PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR**

**G. O. MARCH, A.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.**

## STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area	...	...	...	...	...	15,980 acres
Estimated Population (mid 1956)	...					5,670
Number of Inhabited Houses, end of 1956						1,788
Rateable Value	...	...	...			£48,205
Value of Penny Rate	...	...	...			£184

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### REPORT OF M.O.H.

The general health of the district continues to be very good although with a low death rate and a rising birth rate the population mid-year estimate shows a decline. This is not surprising since the livelihood of the district is almost entirely dependent on agriculture, which is becoming increasingly more mechanised with seasonal demands for part-time labour. Housing too is another factor which must be improved if the young adult population is to be retained.

Slum clearance was commenced during the year with a small clearance area, but more vigorous steps must be made to provide new houses if the considerable number of unfit properties are to be dealt with in the next few years. The question of the rent of new houses in relation to the income of a certain section of the population is a matter for some concern as it is quite common for applicants to ask specifically for allocation to an older council house on account of the lower rent. The Council too would like to close the hutted camp in Wood Lane at the earliest opportunity, as while it provides substandard accommodation which might have been tolerated in the immediate post-war years as an emergency measure, it is now entirely unsatisfactory.

Delays have further postponed the starting date of the very urgent main drainage scheme for the town, the lack of which is a potent limiting factor in the development of the area. This scheme will, of course, do nothing to relieve conditions in the outlying parts of the district where difficulties are being experienced since septic tank drainage is, on account of the flat nature of the land and local subsoil conditions, liable in many cases to be unsatisfactory.

The water supply situation will be greatly eased by the anticipated inauguration of the "Cambridge Scheme" in 1957, whereby the Ramsey and Saint Ives Joint Water Board are to receive initially 250,000 gallons per day. However, the question of increased storage locally, referred to in my Report last year, is a matter which merits serious consideration.

During the year there were five cases notified as being due to food-poisoning. In every case the disease was spread by close personal contact with no suggestion of any specific food having been involved. There was considerable circumstantial evidence to suggest that in the spreading of the disease the asymptomatic carrier condition amongst the infant and school population was a very important factor. To combat this, with the co-operation of the Principal School Medical Officer, paper towels have been provided in all schools. Hand-washing facilities in the larger schools are for the most part good, but one should like to see the provision of hot water extended to all schools as rapidly as possible. Numbers of other cases of infectious diseases notified during the year were very small and there were notably no cases of poliomyelitis, diphtheria or whooping cough. Vaccination against poliomyelitis was begun in a small way as part of the National campaign to offer protection to a selected section of the child population, and initial results give solid grounds for believing that a considerable step forward has been taken in our fight against this disease. One hopes that the supply of the vaccine will allow a much greater number to be offered protection at an early date. However, no effort must be spared to continue to ensure that immunisation against diphtheria and whooping cough is maintained at its present satisfactory level, and if possible improved. The earlier protection against whooping cough (a serious disease of infants) is initiated the better.

I feel that I must pay tribute to the work of your Public Health Inspector during the year. In spite of the gradual inexorable increase in the number of duties which befall him, he has contrived to leave little of importance undone. Nevertheless, the increase of staff approved by the Council but which has not yet materialised in spite of repeated advertisements is necessary if the same standards are to be maintained and if possible improved.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the Members of the Council and their officers and staff for their continued co-operation during yet another year of interesting work.

## VITAL STATISTICS

### Live Births.

Birth Rate per 1000 population ... .. 20.3

### Still Births.

Rate per 1000 total births ... .. 49.6

### Deaths.

Death Rate per 1000 population ... .. 9.7

Deaths from Puerperal Causes per 1000 total }  
(live and still) births ... .. Nil

### Death Rate of Infants under one year of age :—

All infants per 1,000 live births ... .. 26.1

Legitimate infants per 1000 legitimate live births 27.0

Illegitimate infants per 1000 illegitimate live births Nil

	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Actual No. of Deaths	7	3	3	2	3	3
Rates all Infants per 1,000 Live Births	62.5	27.8	25.6	18.5	28.6	26.1

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ... .. 13

Deaths from Measles (all ages) ... .. Nil

Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages) ... Nil

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years) ... Nil

### RATES.

	Per 1000 Population.			Per 1000 live births	Per 1000 total Births
	Live Births	Crude Death Rate	Index Death Rate	Infantile Mortality	Still Births
Ramsey U.D. ...	20.3	9.7	10.8	26.1	49.6
England & Wales ...	15.7	11.7	11.7	23.8	23.0

The following table shows the classification of deaths from all causes, Registrar General's figures.

Causes of Death.				M. 27	F. 28	Total 55
1.	Tuberculosis, respiratory	...	...	—	—	—
2.	Tuberculosis, other	...	...	—	—	—
3.	Syphilitic disease	...	...	—	—	—
4.	Diphtheria	...	...	—	—	—
5.	Whooping cough	...	...	—	—	—
6.	Meningococcal infections	...	...	—	—	—
7.	Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	—	—	—
8.	Measles	...	...	—	—	—
9.	Other infective and parasitic diseases			—	—	—
10.	Malignant neoplasm, stomach	...		2	1	3
11.	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus.			1	—	1
12.	Malignant neoplasm, breast	...	...	—	1	1
13.	Malignant neoplasm, uterus	...	...	—	—	—
14.	Other malignant & lymphatic neoplasms			3	5	8
15.	Leukæmia, aleukæmia	...	...	—	—	—
16.	Diabetes	...	...	—	—	—
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system	...		—	3	3
18.	Coronary disease, angina	...	...	4	2	6
19.	Hypertension with heart disease	...		—	—	—
20.	Other heart disease	...	...	7	8	15
21.	Other circulatory disease	...	...	—	1	1
22.	Influenza	...	...	—	—	—
23.	Pneumonia	...	...	1	3	4
24.	Bronchitis	...	...	1	1	2
25.	Other disease of respiratory system	...		—	—	—
26.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	...		1	—	1
27.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhœa	...		—	—	—
28.	Nephritis and nephrosis	...	...	1	—	1
29.	Hyperplasia of prostate	...	...	1	—	1
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	...		—	—	—
31.	Congenital malformations	...	...	1	1	2
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases			2	2	4
33.	Motor vehicle accidents	...	...	—	—	—
34.	All other accidents	...	...	1	—	1
35.	Suicide	...	...	1	—	1
36.	Homicide and operations of War	...		—	—	—



# **GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA**

## **(a) Laboratory Facilities :**

No change has taken place in the general arrangements during the past year. Bacteriological specimens from Practitioners in the district are examined at the Pathological Department of the Memorial Hospital, Peterborough, or by the Pathological Laboratory, Tennis Court Road, Cambridge.

## **(b) Ambulance Facilities :**

(1) For the removal of infectious cases a motor ambulance is available at the Isolation Hospital, Peterborough at present.

(2) For non-infectious and accident cases, ambulances are provided by the Huntingdon County Council from their depot at Huntingdon.

## **(c) Nursing in the Home :**

Nursing in the home is carried out by three qualified nurses employed by the Huntingdon County Council. All nurses are certified midwives and attend the majority of maternity cases under the Domiciliary Midwifery Scheme.

All cases of Tuberculosis are visited by the Tuberculosis Health Visitor and a report with details of home conditions and circumstances is completed.

## **(d) Clinics and Treatment Centres :**

Infant Welfare Clinics are held at the Health Clinic on the 2nd and last Wednesday every month from 2—4 p.m.

The following additional Clinics are provided :-

School Clinic  
(Minor Ailment)

Health Clinic 3rd Thursday  
of the month, 10—12 noon



Ante-Natal	The Health Clinic Every Tuesday — 2—4 p.m.
Dental Clinic	The Health Clinic 2nd Wednesday of the month 2—4 p.m.
Eyes	London Road Clinic, Old Fletton By Appointment
Tuberculosis	1, Thorpe Road, Peterborough Every Monday — 2—4 p.m. By Appointment.
Orthopædic	Memorial Hospital, Peterborough Every Monday, 2.15 p.m. By Appointment.
Nose, Throat and Ear Clinic	Memorial Hospital, Peterborough every Wednesday at 3 p.m. By Appointment.
Venereal Diseases	Memorial Hospital, Peterborough
Women Only	Fridays — 10.30—12 noon. Wednesdays — 5.30—7 p.m
Men Only	Mondays — 5.30—7 p.m. Thursdays — 5.30—7 p.m.

Under the Ante and Post Natal Scheme, provided by the County Council, expectant mothers are examined twice during their pregnancy (or oftener if necessary) and once after confinement.

**(e) Hospitals :**

- (1) Fever—The treatment of infectious diseases is carried out at the Hospital for Infectious Disease at Peterborough
- (2) The Peterborough Memorial Hospital, the County Hospital, Huntingdon and Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, continue to carry out the general hospital services in the district.
- (3) Provision is made for Maternity cases at the Maternity Unit, Huntingdon.

# REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR AND PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

## TO THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Sir,

I beg to submit my report for the year ending 31st December, 1956.

### **Housing**

Limited progress is being made in dealing with individual houses unfit for human habitation under the Housing Acts.

A Clearance Order was made during the year involving 10 houses, all the tenants being offered housing accommodation by the Council.

The main set back to Slum Clearance is the shortage of housing accommodation for the displaced tenants, a problem which can only be solved by an intensive building programme.

### **Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year**

Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... ..	43
Number of inspections made for the purpose ... ..	148
Number of houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation...	22
Number of houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... ..	20

### **Remedy of defects without service of formal notices**

Number of dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	12
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### **Action under Statutory Powers**

Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... ..	1
Number of dwelling houses which were rendered so fit after service of formal notice. (Public Health Acts.) ... ..	1
Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made. (Housing Act 1936. Section 11) ...	Nil
Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... ..	4

Number of separate tenements in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... ..	1
Number of undertakings accepted from owners not to use houses for human habitation ... ..	3

## New Housing

During the year no new Council Houses were completed although 18 houses are under construction. 9 new houses were erected by private enterprise.

The Council now have a total of 501 houses, including 20 prefabricated bungalows. Of these houses 201 have been erected since 1946.

There are now 29 huts still occupied at the Wood Lane Camp, and as the condition of these huts is continually deteriorating I feel that the families should be re-housed and the Camp closed as soon as possible.

Land for future housing sites is still a problem which is holding up the Council's future housing programme.

## Improvement Grants

Applications in respect of improvements to 14 private houses were approved for the purpose of Grant under the Housing Act 1949, also 2 cases for conversion from one house into two houses were approved.

Works of improvement on 7 houses and the conversion of one house into two were completed during the year.

## Nuisances

Abated as a result of informal action ... ..	32
Abated as a result of statutory action ... ..	1
Analysis of complaints received :	
Premises ... ..	9
Overflowing Cesspools ... ..	5
Accumulation of Refuse ... ..	3
Foul ditches, etc. ... ..	7
Drains ... ..	9
Disinfestation ... ..	2

## Inspections and Visits

Public Health Acts	...	...	...	...	...	...	77
Housing Acts	...	...	...	...	...	...	128
Sewers	...	...	...	...	...	...	20
Drain Tests	...	...	...	...	...	...	47
Rodent Control	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Food and Drugs Act	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Meat and Food Inspection	...	...	...	...	...	...	364
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Shops	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
Moveable Dwellings	...	...	...	...	...	...	63
Refuse Collection and Disposal	...	...	...	...	...	...	30
Infectious Disease	...	...	...	...	...	...	27
Mortuary	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Factories and Workshops	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Water Supply	...	...	...	...	...	...	568
Council House Maintenance	...	...	...	...	...	...	649
New Buildings	...	...	...	...	...	...	160
Highways	...	...	...	...	...	...	252
Playing Field	...	...	...	...	...	...	25
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	...	38

Total ... 2,468

## Closets

Number of houses at the end of the year with W.C's	...	944
"    "    "    "    "    Pail Closets	...	828
"    "    "    "    "    Privy Vaults	...	16
Number of W.C's constructed during the year for new houses	...	13
Number of W.C's newly constructed for old property	...	12

## Milk Supply

Three milk distributors are registered and the following Supplementary Licences for the sale of milk were granted during the year:—

Tuberculin Tested	Pasteurised	Sterilised
4	3	1

**Water Supply**

Samples from the water supply from the Ramsey and St. Ives Joint Water Board are taken at regular intervals and forwarded to the Pathological Laboratory, Memorial Hospital, Peterborough.

Number of samples taken from the main piped supply was 13, all of which proved satisfactory.

The average daily consumption of water is steadily increasing and now amounts to 113,200 gallons per day. It is possible that the question of increasing the supply of water will have to be considered in the near future as the capacity of the present reservoir is 120,000 gallons.

Bursts occurred to water mains on 10 occasions, and there were 12 burst service pipes all of which were repaired with the minimum amount of delay. The burst mains were due to corrosion, pulled joints and fractures caused by ground movement. Bursts to service pipes were in the main due to external and internal corrosion, galvanised pipes being particularly susceptible.

**Meat and Food Inspection**

Slaughtering is being carried out at the 4 slaughterhouses in the area, and generally speaking I find that the butchers collaborate as far as possible for the purpose of meat inspection.

The following table shows the results of the meat inspection service:—

Number of Slaughterhouses on register	...	...	...	4
Number of visits for meat inspection	...	...	...	377

**Carcases Inspected and Condemned**

				Cattle exclu- ding Cows		Sheep and Lambs		Pigs
				Cows	Calves			
No. killed	...	...	...	59	20	7	50 +	3589 +
No. Inspected	...	...	...	59	20	7	50	3589

All diseases except

Tuberculosis:—

Whole carcases condemned ... ..	—	—	—	—	5
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	3	1	—	—	17
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis ...	5.1	5%	—	—	.61%
Tuberculosis only:—					
Whole carcases condemned ... ..	—	1	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	1	—	—	—	4
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis ... ..	1.7%	5%	—	—	.1%
Total weight of meat condemned ... ..					1,652 lbs.

### Food Premises

The number of food premises in the area by type of business are as under:—

Butchers' Shops ... ..	10
Grocers and General Stores ... ..	22
Greengrocers ... ..	6
Bakers ... ..	7
Confectioners ... ..	17
Fish Premises ... ..	4
Cafes, Restaurants, Hotels ... ..	5
Total ... ..	71

Number of Premises registered under the Food and Drugs Acts ... .. 24

### Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

The need of an up to date system of sewerage for Ramsey Town is still an urgent necessity, as pointed out in previous Annual Reports.

A starting date for the new sewerage scheme is still awaited, and it is anticipated this will be in 1957.



## **Factories Act, 1937**

Total number of Factories (including Bakehouses) ...	26
Number in which nuisances were abated ...	1

## **Refuse Collection**

Refuse is collected in the Town Area weekly and on a fortnightly basis from Ramsey St. Mary's, The Heights, Ramsey Mereside and Forty Foot Bridge by Contractors.

The Stocking Fen Tip is almost full and the majority of refuse is disposed of by controlled tipping in the disused pits at Brick Kilns Farm.

The collection of night soil is carried out by contract twice weekly in the Town and weekly in the outside areas. Although this is an absolute necessity, it is a system which is full of complaints and one which can only be abolished by the provision of a proper sewerage scheme. Great difficulty is being experienced in the disposal of night soil; at the present time it is composted with straw, etc.

The average cost of collection and disposal of refuse and night soil is 7.6d. per bin/pail.

The Council provide a free cesspool and septic tank emptying service where required, 97 being emptied during the year at an average cost of £1 8s. 8d. each.

## **Moveable Dwellings**

During the year 17 licences were granted to erect station and use moveable dwellings under Section 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936. All moveable dwellings are inspected from time to time to ensure that the sanitary arrangements are satisfactory.

Two Licences were issued for camping sites, but neither were developed to comply with the conditions of the licence and are not therefore in use.

## **Rodent Control**

A rodent control service is provided for private business premises in the area under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949. The rodent operator inspected 588 properties and carried out 56 treatments in cases of infestation.

## **General**

In conclusion may I express my appreciation of the active interest and support of the Chairman and Members of the Council, the Medical Officer of Health for his advice and the Staff and Workmen for their co-operation.

G. O. MARCH,  
Surveyor and Public Health Inspector.

The following table gives the incidence of notifiable diseases (other than tuberculosis) in the area during 1956.

[illegible]

## TUBERCULOSIS

During the year no new case of Tuberculosis was notified and there were no deaths from the disease.

Numbers on the register at the end of the year were :—

Male		Female	
Pulmonary	Non Pulmonary	Pulmonary	Non Pulmonary
18	5	13	4

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

F. D. F. STEEDE,

Medical Officer of Health





